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June 8, 2010

The Honorable Steven Beshear
Governor
700 Capitol Avenue, Suite 100
Frankfort, KY 40601

Dear Governor Beshear:

I received your letter yesterday asking me to support efforts to extend the enhanced federal match rate for Medicaid (FMAP). Unfortunately, I am unable to do so.

First, let me say that I support the Medicaid program and understand how important it is for many Kentuckians. I also recognize the financial difficulties the Commonwealth finds itself in. You, along with the members of the House and Senate in the General Assembly, have some tough choices to make about what the spending priorities will be for the Commonwealth.

However, just as it is irresponsible for Kentucky to rely on money from the federal government to balance the Commonwealth's budget, it would also be irresponsible for the federal government to continue bailing out the states. Just like the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the federal government is in a financial crisis of its own, and quite frankly, we do not have the money either.

The federal government is now \$13 trillion in debt and counting. This Congress is showing no signs of actually reigning in spending. In fact, every few weeks or months, Congress passes yet another "emergency" bill that it refuses to pay for. This money simply gets added to the debt and will be the responsibility of future generations to pay.

The Majority Party continues to pass these unpaid-for "emergency" bills in spite of the fact that they passed pay-as-you-go legislation in February 2010. When pay-as-you-go passed, the Majority Party spent a lot of time congratulating itself for being fiscally responsible and stopping deficit spending. However, in only a few months, pay-as-you-go has proven to be a complete sham. Congress is spending money like teenagers at the mall with their parents' credit cards. Unfortunately, it is our children who will be stuck with this tab.

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The financial burdens we are leaving our children and grandchildren threaten this country's future. Therefore, I cannot support more deficit spending. The federal and state governments must begin to live within their means, and that means making hard choices. The federal government clearly isn't going to, but I hope you and the General Assembly can take this opportunity to put Kentucky on stronger financial ground, instead of relying on handouts from the federal government.

Best personal regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Jim Bunning". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "B".

JIM BUNNING
United States Senator